



Xuhang straw weaving artworks are featured in an exhibition at the Shanghai Natural History Museum to mark the Year of the Snake. — Yang Yujie

# Xuhang straw weavers deck up zodiac snake

Li Chengjin and Wang Jie

**X**uhang straw weaving is a traditional handicraft originated in the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907).

Its products span over 20 major categories, including slippers, handbags, fruit baskets, cup sleeves, and basin pads. These items are rich in color, lightweight and convenient for daily functional use with an aesthetic beauty.

In 2008, Xuhang Straw Weaving Craft was included in the second batch of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

To celebrate the Year of the Snake, Wang Qin, the representative inheritor of intangible cultural heritage of Xuhang straw weaving and her team have brought various zodiac-themed straw-woven products before the public.

The Snake Embracing Peace series consists of three straw-woven snakes coiled around bottles. (The Chinese characters of 瓶 (*ping*, bottle) and 平 (*ping*, peace) share the same pronunciation). In order to add a realistic flavor to the work, parts of the yellow straw were lightly picked out to mimic snake scales.

The Cute Cartoon Snake features a double-twist weaving for the head of the snake, making it more lively with a three-dimensional effect. The body

uses a special weaving technique to depict its flexible curves with layers.

The Dancing Snake utilizes yellow straw of different hues to create rich snake-scale patterns, combining Xuhang straw weaving with paper-cutting techniques.

The Blessing Snake for the New Year is woven via different hued yellow straws, fully showcasing the natural texture and hues of the material itself.

The Simulated Straw Snake has mainly adopted the double-twist weaving technique, which subtly creates realistic visual effects via the textures and the posture of the snake.

A snake-shaped decorative storage container utilizes the double-twist weaving technique to showcase the intricate textures of straw, seamlessly blending the snake patterns into everyday aesthetics.

Another piece features a lively little green dragon, a symbol often associated with the snake in Chinese culture. It combines straw weaving with golden embellishments, where the golden ingots add an auspicious and prosperous touch to the artwork.

If you're interested in Xuhang straw weaving, you can visit the Wang Qin Studio at Xuhang Cultural and Sports Service Center.

